



McGREGOR W. SCOTT

*United States Attorney
Eastern District of California*

NEWS RELEASE

Sacramento
501 I Street, Suite 10-100
Sacramento, CA 95814
Tel 916/554-2700
TTY 916/554-2877

Fresno
2500 Tulare St., Suite 4401
Fresno, CA 93721
Tel (559) 497-4000
TTY (559) 497-4500

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Contact: Karen Escobar

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FRESNO MAN CHARGED WITH MARIJUANA GROWS AFTER HOUSE FIRE

FRESNO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that a federal grand jury sitting in Fresno indicted ANDY LIENG, aka Xi Andy Lieng, Jr., aka Andy Xi Lieng, Jr., 39, of Fresno, California, for the cultivation over 1,000 marijuana plants.

This case is being investigated by the Fresno County Sheriff's Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

According to court documents, the investigation began on October 29, 2007, while firefighters were containing a fire at 2482 S. Villa Avenue in southeast Fresno. The fire was caused by an electrical circuit overload. While fighting the fire, firefighters discovered a sophisticated marijuana grow operation within the residence. The indoor cultivation of marijuana requires the use of a large amount of electricity to power high intensity heat lamps and other electrical equipment required for a successful harvest. The firefighters contacted the Fresno County Sheriff's Office and narcotics detectives responded to investigate the marijuana grow. The detectives found approximately 862 marijuana plants with an estimated street value of more than \$2 million.

Detectives were then able to link the Villa property with another residence at 5307 W. Donner in Fresno, where they found an even bigger indoor growing operation consisting of over 900 marijuana plants. Further investigation revealed that LIENG not only owned the two properties but was directly involved in the marijuana cultivation operations found there.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Karen A. Escobar, who is prosecuting the case, LIENG faces a sentence of 10 years to life imprisonment and a \$4,000,000 fine, if convicted. However, the actual sentence will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables, and any applicable statutory sentencing factors. He is also subject to deportation to Vietnam, if convicted. LIENG is scheduled to appear in federal court for arraignment on the indictment on Friday, December 7.

The charges in the indictment are only allegations, and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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